

Mundane Virtues

To start the story, one player will be the teller and the rest of you will play characters shaping and reacting to the story. Your characters are defined by their virtues and assets, as well as whatever history and personality you choose to supply.

These rules presume an Ancient Greek setting without any magic, but by changing the available assets and virtues it is possible to emulate any setting including those with magic.

Your character's virtues

Some virtues are innate. Others require tools. Your character has all the innate virtues and is competent with three virtues selected randomly (roll 1d3, then 1d6) or purposefully from the list below:

1. The Head (innate) – use reasoning and logic to figure out puzzles.
2. The Hand (innate) – do dexterous tasks.
3. The Fist (innate) – inflict injury with hands and feet.
4. The Foot (innate) – move undetected.
5. The Legs (innate) – move quickly.
6. The Back (innate) – exert your strength in steady labor.
1. The Heart (innate) – tend to others' emotional and spiritual needs.
2. The Tongue (innate) – persuade others of your truth.
3. The Shout (innate) – rally and inspire followers.
4. The Ear (innate) – hear the truth of what another says.
5. The Eye (innate) – see what others miss.
6. The Song (innate) or Instrument (tool) – please with music.
1. The Pot (tool) – make delicious food or drink.
2. The Mortar and Pestle (tool) – use herbs to benefit or bane.
3. The Bandage and Splint (tool) – tend to injuries.
4. The Sword or Spear or Ax or Staff (tool) – inflict injury.
5. The Sling or Bow (tool) – inflict injury at a distance.
6. The Hammer or Brush (tool) – make useful or beautiful things.

Once your character accumulates seven successes using a virtue, they become competent. Once they have thirteen successes using a virtue with which they already were competent, they master the virtue. Your character's Spleen (the

number of failures they can withstand) equals the number of virtues with which they are competent, plus the number of virtues they have mastered.

Your character's assets

Every character starts with some basic assets: humble clothes, sandals, a hat, a belt, a walking staff, a dagger or hatchet, a backpack (containing a blanket, a wooden cup, seven days of barley cakes and cheese, and tinder and flint). Then roll 2d6 three times on the table below, picking a column each time. If you get the same thing, you may roll again or have duplicate assets. Your character does not necessarily have assets that match their competent virtues.

2	Breastplate	Cottage of your own	Powerful enemy
3	Bow	Medicinal herb garden	1d3 cows
4	Dagger	Scroll of knowledge	Workshop of your own
5	Leather coat	Animal companion	Craft tools
6	Shield	Boots	Lamp with oil
7	Spear or ax	Cloak	2d6 chickens
8	Helmet	Simple jewelry	Rope
9	Sling	Spouse	Fishing net or sickle
10	Greaves	1d3 children	1d6 goats
11	Sword	Writing tools	Olive grove
12	Full armor	Amulet	Powerful friend

A sample character

Machaon, a lad of 14 years. Competent with the Eye, the Legs, and the Heart. Spleen 3. Owner of a cottage, a medicinal herb garden, and an herbalist's tools.

How to play

In telling the story, rolls of six-sided dice (d6) resolve the outcome when your character challenges an opponent or an obstacle described by the teller.

Mundane Virtues

If your character has an innate virtue or a tool that is useful for the situation, roll 1d6. If your character is competent with the virtue, roll 2d6. If they have an advantage, roll an extra die. If your character has mastered the virtue, roll an extra die each time you roll a 6. If your character is at a disadvantage, or is impaired in using the virtue, always roll only 1d6. If your character lacks any relevant virtue or tool, describe their defeat.

Each 5 or 6 counts as a success. A roll with no 5s or 6s is a failure. Accumulate successes and failures as you roll for your character's actions to overcome the situation. Each opponent or obstacle requires some number of successes to overcome. Your character can withstand a certain number of failures (equal to their Spleen) before they are defeated by the situation.

Each success advances your character toward overcoming the obstacle or opponent. Successes accumulate from roll to roll. Once your character accumulates enough successes, they achieve victory. You or the teller describe how this happens.

Each time you roll a failure, you or the teller describe a consequence that impairs your character's use of a virtue (injury, breakage of a tool, embarrassment). If your character accumulates failures exceeding their Spleen, you or the teller must describe the additional consequences of defeat.

Successes and failures reset at the end of a situation. Impaired virtues take time to heal and tools take time to repair.

The world

Your character's world includes scenery, company, opponents, and obstacles. Scenery and company are innocuous. Opponents and obstacles present situations that your character must overcome or succumb to. Sometimes your character's actions may transform scenery or company into obstacles or opponents.

An opponent is described by their appearance, their affect toward your character, their equipment, the number of successes needed to overcome them. Obstacles are described by their effects on your character and by the number of successes and type of virtue needed to overcome them.

Some exemplary opponents for an exemplary Ancient Greek setting:

- A lycanthrope (wolf-skin wearing vagabond) – furtive, aggressive, predatory. A leather coat, a spear, a sling, a dog, a cloak, a powerful enemy. Three successes to overcome.
- A champion (king's hero) – forthright, dominant, friendly. Full armor, a sword, a spear, a shield, a spouse, an olive grove, a powerful friend. Seven successes to overcome.
- A band of lycanthropes – hostile, aggressive. Leather coats, spears, slings. Thirteen successes to overcome.
- A lion – a predator. A lion skin. Three successes to frighten off, nine successes to kill.
- A siren – luring, enthralling. Five successes to overcome.

Some exemplary obstacles:

- Weather. The exemplary setting may get Hot (roll a success on 1d6) but goes back to Warm (roll a success on 1d6). It may Rain in the dry season (roll two successes on 1d6) or in the wet season (roll two successes on 2d6) but goes back to Dry (roll a success on 2d6). Check daily. Lose 1 Spleen after any night unsheltered in the Rain or after any day in the Heat. Spleen is restored by resting warm and dry.
- Travel. Roads are rare and rough. To sustain a long day's walking, roll Legs. Failure means 1 Spleen lost. To make a good shelter, roll Hammer. Failure means your character gets no rest.
- Traps. A pivoting foot trap could injure or kill your character if it defeats them, and might require two or three successes with the Foot and the Head.
- Foraging. Finding food in the wild may require one to three successes using the Head along with the Eye (foraging), the Hand (trapping), the Bow (hunting), or the Spear and the Legs (chasing).

Adding magic

If you want magic, add a virtue for it. This could be innate or could be a learned virtue that requires a tool. An innate magical virtue might be The Word. A learned magical virtue might be The Amulet or The Scroll. The teller will limit the power of magic in the story.